Epilogue: A Twenty-First Century Terrorism Agenda for the United States

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I looked up terrorism as a useful way to begin this epilogue. I found two definitions. The first is the "systematic use of violence, fear or intimidation to achieve an end." And what's important about that is the word "systematic." Think about the varying terrorist experiences we have had recently—Osama bin Laden, Aum Shinrikyo, and others. You could characterize them as systematic, not single events, so it is useful to look at that definition. The second definition is equally interesting. It is "an atmosphere of threat or violence," not threat or violence itself, but an atmosphere of threat or violence, which implies a terrorist, after an initial event, might be very successful at propagating terrorism by more subtle means. So I thought that this is a good place to start. It is important in both of these definitions to understand that achieving the ends is not necessarily the same as the means to a terrorist. Sometimes we focus on the means, sometimes it is useful to step back and focus on the ends.

The things I would like to discuss include:

- My perception on why this particular subject comes to us now;
- What the US government is doing in general;
- What the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) is doing, in specific; and
- What has been recommended recently; and then
- Can we derive a 21st Century Agenda for terrorism by examining a couple of "cases."

When I talk to my own agency, or when I talk outside, I say that I think of terrorism like I do law and business. There are general theories, but there are also case studies. And you are only as good as the number of case studies you have done. In fact, when you go out in the field, your ability to

achieve your goal is drawn on all the theories, but also all the lessons you learn from the scenarios; there are the operators who have worked with the case studies that have the advantage. So, I have a fairly strong affiliation for the law and business approach to understanding things.

How did this come to us, this concern about terrorists now? There are two interesting, slightly different answers to that. The first is our dominant military might, both nuclear and conventional, particularly with the high-tech capabilities. Our intelligence and command and communication capabilities basically deter any classical confrontation. No one is going to be brainless enough to come up against us one-on-one, straight on. And that, in fact, invites an asymmetric response—coming at the United States on its terms is perhaps one of the dumbest things you can possibly do. Therefore, the terrorist option (playing the game by other rules) is very attractive to adversaries. That is one function driving our current concern.

The second driver is that our societal and economic success, perhaps overbearing success, is both to some extent ending, which is a driver for bad behavior and a negative reaction to our role and presence in other parts of the world. It is easy to forget that because we like ourselves so much, we forget that the rest of the world does not necessarily like us. A particular problem couples both of these to some extent since we have become the last resort for other world leaders. Depending on how you interpret this, it is sometimes good and sometimes insane. We have become the last resort for other world leaders in reaction to ethnic violence and political aggrandizement. In general, the reaction to these problems leaves us with an unsatisfactory peace. We need only to look at Iraq, Bosnia, Kosovo, and other places to see examples of how unsatisfactory the peace is, which makes us enemies and invites reprisals against us based on frustration. So, in fact, our success at being world cop has led to the problem. It is particularly important to realize that in some of these places, after all, we have gone in on fairly high ethical grounds whereas most of the people there just wanted to get on with the business of killing each other. So our interruption was not welcome by either side. Terrorism comes

to us partly because we have a lot of functions, capabilities, and roles—more than anyone else.

What are we doing in response? We are doing the typical American response. It is one of the things we are good at it—we are proceeding in parallel with many different things at once and not necessarily bringing them together. We have a great many programs that address the military and civilian sectors (some flawed). We are seeking technological solutions in all the categories we possibly can. And, we are fighting for the control of purses. Since I am an operator, I tend to notice that we tend to fight for that control without operationalizing the whole solution. But in retrospect, as a student of this and an operator, what is good is that unlike in other times in our past, we do not seem to be deluding ourselves by looking for a "silver bullet." That is the good news. In fact, we are admitting that this is pretty difficult, multi-component, multi-spectral problem. So, no one is hawking a single solution to the problem. If go back and look at our fifty-year past and the Cold War, that is our usual approach. Whatever difficulties may have started this problem, they will not necessarily cure it. We may not be looking for one solution because no one wants the assignment for it, which is also a universal problem. If you walk the halls of the Pentagon, the problem of how to counter terrorism or how to do consequence management or how to gather intelligence to keep from having to do the other two is not "number one" on anybody's list. That is not a bad thing; it is a realistic thing. Everyone has lots of other assignments. Thus, the fact that no one is searching for a "silver bullet" solution may be because no one wants to get out front on this issue.

What is my agency (DTRA) doing, it is fair to ask. We are full-spectrum partners in this; we do both non-proliferation and counterproliferation; we play offense and defense. We execute the inspections, the arms control processes for every treaty that the US is a partner to, in a very classical sense. We execute the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, which dismantles systems in the former Soviet Union to try to prevent the migration of hardware and intellectual capabilities to other states,

although we do not have a human dimension. We are not paying people, scientists, and engineers to keep from migrating, but we do work to keep hardware from disappearing. We run the export controls business for the Department of Defense and the study of the more difficult problem of patterns of commercial transactions that might tell you if someone is acquiring the capabilities to produce weapons of destruction. Those are the pieces of my agency that deal with non-proliferation, keeping weapons of mass destruction out of the hands of bad actors.

On the counterproliferation side, it tends more towards the sharp end of the stick. We shape the chemical and biological program for our warfighters. We are very, very busily working for the battle CINCs, providing exercises to test this notion of how the CINCs work in the warfighting environment and how we help a CINC respond to civilian needs—not a simple problem. Again, we come back to my emphasis on exercises. We run a lot of exercises that shape our doctrine and try to suggest operational changes. In that area, we are coordinating actions well in advance of some the organizations in both the Department and Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency to try to handle the full spectrum of research and development in the national security area to deal with this threat. We have a major role in nuclear deterrence. And we provide important derivative training in consequence management. It is useful to remember that for fifty years we have not quite practiced how to do consequence management, and we need to determine what from the nuclear era is applicable to the biological or chemical environment. Finally, in the counterproliferation business, we run full spectrum—from sensors to define what a facility is doing, to suggesting what the attack modality might be, to modeling and simulation, to deliberate planning, to emergency response, and so on. Floating over the top of all of this organization is a set of system studies to define new programs, required roles, capabilities, and responsibilities.

I think a very fundamental point I want to make is this notion of what has been recommended or what to put on a counterterrorist agenda. Some of

you are obviously going to ask me questions about the recommendations of the Commission regarding how the government should be organized to handle counterterrorism. That Commission has recommended we should have a czar, a senior person on the National Security Council, more coordination across agencies, perhaps more committees, and others ways of coordinating the counterterrorist efforts and other inevitable recommendations. There is a recommendation for an Assistant Secretary and related organizational changes. I do not want to minimize that effort. But what I would like to do in response to the topic I was given for this epilogue is to suggest a somewhat different agenda for responding to this problem.

I said I believe in case studies or working problems. I will give you two that are very much worth our time in thinking through counterterrorism. The first of these, familiar to all in the military, is the Goldwater-Nichols Act. The Goldwater-Nichols Act drew a very, very fundamental watershed distinction. It said that the Services would organize, train, and equip and that the CINCs would do joint planning, exercises, and execution. The difficulty we have with counterterrorism is there is a food-fight going on within the Pentagon and in town, that is primarily focused on the issues of organization, training, and equipment. That seems to be where the money is, that seems to be where the publicity is; it is a procurement activity; these are pretty much 8-5 jobs. I am an operator; I am not used to making money my job. My concern, my function—having been an emergency response manager in my past—is what I call the "Organizational Chart When We Go to War." The "Organization Chart for War" is different than the "8-5 Organizational Chart." My concern in the counterterrorist area is how we focus on what in the Goldwater Nichols Act were the planning, exercising, and execution responsibilities of the CINCs. In general, "The Organizational Chart When We Go to War" is different; it is leaner and certainly a lot more practiced. The Marines have a useful expression—"muscle memory." If we are going to do one of these things for real, we need to have "muscle memory."

How do we concentrate on joint planning and execution? How do we see the difference; how do we find the gaps and fill them? It is important to realize that counterterrorism is not going to war. The CINCs go to war when their plans are complete; that is their job. They make a plan and then they push off. The difficulty is that in terrorism, war is thrust on you; it comes to you. So the CINCs get the plans top-down and in fact, in counterterrorism and consequence management, you are going to have to plan bottom-up. You are going to have to react to the event given to you. The planning—the calls for help—flow *up* the chain, not down—or up *then* down the chain. It is going to be driven by resource needs of the real event, not by planning in advance.

We do not have a good model for this. We need to derive one. We certainly have to practice, but it differs from the organization, training, and equipment role quite clearly. We have figured out how to organize, train, and equip, but we have not yet figured out how to work out models, how we let, in a remarkable way, the civilian world drive the military. We talk a lot about military assistance to civilian first responders, but I think we have problems with that. We need to work on educating the civilian world in advance of an event and the Service counterparts on how this would work. So my interest, and our (DTRA'S) interest to some extent, is in scenario development that lets us practice, practice, practice. That is why, as I said earlier, DTRA is working with Special Operations Command on exercises today; we are working with Joint Forces Command tomorrow on an exercise in their area; and in the European Command responding to terrorist activity. Again, the intent is to find out how we drive this thing from the bottom-up. It is useful to remember that we have a headstart here. We have been doing this for fifty years. But there, the military owned the problem; in this case the military does not own the problem; the civilian sector is a strong player.

There is another concern. The difference between acting versus reacting, or the counterterrorism versus consequence management pieces. The harder part of this will be moving to the anticipatory step and understanding the intelligence taskings and means that will give us advance warning of these

events so we are not just in the reactive mode. If we are driven to be reactive, we can be the best reactors in the world and still not necessarily be successful, if we are forced to play a passive role. That is the first case, the Goldwater-Nichols Act, which I think needs careful examination to see how it does or does not help with the situation.

The second one is more technical and operational, and kind of interesting. We have, in fact, solved a terrorist problem in the last twenty-five years. We have solved it so successfully that we have forgotten about it; and that is a treat. The problem was aircraft highjacking and bombing. We solved that problem; it has more or less gone away. It had an operational and industrial solution. What is interesting is that we have forgotten the technical, capital, and operational costs of the integrated system of metal and explosive detectors that sit in all the airports of this nation, that have, by and large, been successful in preventing airplane bombings and highjackings, which looked to be endemic just thirty years ago. The system is not perfect, but it is good enough. Since 1986, there have been four aircraft bombings, each of which caused over 100 deaths. Interestingly enough, none of those flights originated in the United States. Thus, we have pretty much nailed this thing, on a scale of other problems.

Pressing ahead—in the chemical and biological world—we need to move to some sensor systems, to integrated logic that can detect in time to protect and warn for counterterrorism, not just for effective treatment for most of these cases. After the fact identification is nice, but we would like to do better. In the nuclear area, I will not kid you about how hard this problem is. We still have quite a lot of work to do to control special nuclear materials and the places they might leak, to detect transit across transnational boundaries. This is an exceedingly hard problem.

What is interesting is that having worked this case with the aircraft industry, we know the costs; we can use those as economic targets. An interesting question is "what would we pay for the equivalent of installing metal detectors in airports; is that price equivalent to what we would pay for

installing sensors in public buildings?" What can we do for that price? We can begin to work the problem backwards that way. I have watched evolution of detector development. I do not think we have ever put economic modeling of the problem and the market out in front; so the other thing I hold out to you is that we need to commercialize this sector. We pay that price without knowing it, therefore it cannot be too high. Are we willing to pay twice that, three times that to detect biological weapons? I leave that assignment to the reader…. I didn't say I was going to give you all the answers.

It is fair to talk about a couple of my fears. I have one lingering fear. This may seem funny. My lingering fear is the development or arrival of a terrorist with a sense of humor; it is a scary thing. Remember the definition: "the use of intimidation or the creation of an atmosphere of threat." A terrorist with a sense of humor can probably achieve the end of destabilizing or discrediting a government without killing many or even any people, if he/she is very, very clever. I can create the appearance of terrorism or the impact of terrorism without very many deaths. If you want a good reference for this, go back and read the thirty-year old book called *The Monkey Wrench Gang* by Edward Abbey. It is a book about eco-terrorism in the American West, about three men and a woman who were angry with developers. It is a terrorist with a sense of humor. The book was very unpopular with some people at the time, but it is worth a re-read.

There is a famous San Francisco story I love to tell. About ten years ago, San Francisco, being an old labor town, was one of the last places where there were social activists. A campaign started to buy the power plants and run them by the city. The semi-socialists lobbied that surely the power would be cheaper if the plants were run by the people. And you can see in California, the slow work-up to this campaign, about six weeks to effectively "nationalize" the power plants. A beloved humor columnist in San Francisco ended the entire campaign one Sunday morning by writing one line in his Sunday column. He wrote, "You mean they are going to run the powerplants with people who can't remember to close the windows when they are washing

buses." On Monday morning he went to work, and the entire political campaign was over; it had died; and it was never mentioned again. You should not underestimate the attitude of the civilian population if you can successfully create a matter of trust with the federal government. So one of the things I worry about is a terrorist with a sense of humor who knows how to play the game who destroys that trust.

Let me say, in conclusion, I think these steps, the careful analyses of past cases and problems and previous work could give us an adequate agenda of the 21st Century. I think neither the threat nor its solution, quite surprisingly, require drastic social steps or impossible technical breakthroughs. They do require, however, a very serious and focused effort and shared vision of the Executive and Congress, which is pretty hard to get. What is important to recognize is the shared vision has to be held for a very long time.